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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/55/602/Add.2 and Corr.1)*]

55/96. Promoting and consolidating democracy

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and reaffirming also that everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1]

Bearing in mind Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1999/57 of 27 April 1999[2] and 2000/47 of 25 April 2000,[3]

Recognizing the indissoluble link between human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the international human rights treaties and the foundation of any democratic society, and reaffirming the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights,[4] which states that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing,

Recalling that all peoples have the right to self-determination, by virtue of which they can freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development,

Recalling also that, in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the World Conference on Human Rights recommended that priority should be given to national and international action to promote democracy, development and human rights and that the international community should support the strengthening and promotion of democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the entire world,

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[1] Resolution 217 A (III).
[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 3* (E/1999/23), chap. II, sect. A.
[3] Ibid., *2000, Supplement No. 3* and corrigendum (E/2000/23 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A.
[4] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

Recalling further its resolutions 53/243 A and B of 13 September 1999, containing, respectively, the Declaration and the Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace,

Recognizing and respecting the rich and diverse nature of the community of the world's democracies, which arise out of all of the world's social, cultural and religious beliefs and traditions,

Recognizing that, while all democracies share common features, there is no one universal model of democracy,

Reaffirming its commitment to the process of democratization of States, and that democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives,

Reaffirming that good governance, as referred to in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[5] is among the indispensable factors for building and strengthening peaceful, prosperous and democratic societies,

Aware of the crucial importance of the active involvement and contribution of civil society in processes of governance that affect the lives of people,

Recalling commitments undertaken by Member States for the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, within the framework of the United Nations and other international organizations,

Welcoming measures, such as decision AHG/Dec.141 (XXXV) adopted in 1999 by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity,[6] resolution AG/RES.1080 (XXI-091) adopted in 1991 by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States and the Moscow Document on the Human Dimension adopted in 1991 by the Conference on the Human Dimension of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which commit Member States to taking certain steps in the event of an interruption of democratic government, as well as the Commonwealth Declaration adopted at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, held at Harare in 1991,[7] which commits members to fundamental democratic principles,

Commending the wish of an increasing number of countries all over the world to devote their energy, means and political will to the building of democratic societies in which individuals have the opportunity to shape their own destiny,

Noting the initiatives taken by the countries that participated in the first, second and third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held, respectively, at Manila in June 1988, Managua in July 1994 and Bucharest in September 1997,

Noting also the ministerial conference entitled "Towards a Community of Democracies", hosted by the Government of Poland at Warsaw on 26 and 27 June 2000,

Noting further the Forum on Emerging Democracies, held at Sana'a from 27 to 30 June 1999,

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[5] See resolution 55/2.

[6] See A/54/424, annex II.

[7] A/46/708, annex.

Noting that the fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies is scheduled to be held at Cotonou, Benin, from 4 to 6 December 2000, and also noting the initiative of the Government of Mali to host, at Bamako from 1 to 3 November 2000, following the Moncton Declaration adopted in September 1999 at Moncton, Canada, by the Eighth Summit of la Francophonie,[a] an international symposium at the ministerial level on the status of the practices of democracy, rights and freedoms in the French-speaking community,

1. *Calls upon* States to promote and consolidate democracy, inter alia, by:

(*a*) Promoting pluralism, the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, maximizing the participation of individuals in decision-making and the development of effective public institutions, including an independent judiciary, accountable legislature and public service and an electoral system that ensures periodic, free and fair elections;

(*b*) Promoting, protecting and respecting all human rights, including the right to development, and fundamental freedoms, in particular:

(i) Freedom of thought, conscience, religion, belief, peaceful assembly and association, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of opinion, and free, independent and pluralistic media;

(ii) The rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, including the right freely to express, preserve and develop their identity without any discrimination and in full equality before the law;

(iii) The rights of indigenous people;

(iv) The rights of children, the elderly and persons with physical or mental disabilities;

(v) Actively promoting gender equality with the aim of achieving full equality between men and women;

(vi) Taking appropriate measures to eradicate all forms of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

(vii) Considering becoming parties to international human rights instruments;

(viii) Fulfilling their obligations under the international human rights instruments to which they are parties;

(*c*) Strengthening the rule of law by:

(i) Ensuring equality before the law and equal protection under the law;

(ii) Ensuring the right to liberty and security of person, the right to equal access to justice, and the right to be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power in the case of detention with a view to avoiding arbitrary arrest;

(iii) Guaranteeing the right to a fair trial;

(iv) Ensuring due process of law and the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law;

[a] A/54/453, annex I.

(v) Promoting the independence and integrity of the judiciary and, by means of appropriate education, selection, support and allocation of resources, strengthening its capacity to render justice with fairness and efficiency, free from improper or corrupt outside influence;

(vi) Guaranteeing that all persons deprived of their liberty are treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person;

(vii) Ensuring appropriate civil and administrative remedies and criminal sanctions for violations of human rights, as well as effective protection for human rights defenders;

(viii) Including human rights education in the training for civil servants and law enforcement and military personnel;

(ix) Ensuring that the military remains accountable to the democratically elected civilian government;

(*d*) Developing, nurturing and maintaining an electoral system that provides for the free and fair expression of the people's will through genuine and periodic elections, in particular by:

(i) Guaranteeing that everyone can exercise his or her right to take part in the government of his or her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives;

(ii) Guaranteeing the right to vote freely and to be elected in a free and fair process at regular intervals, by universal and equal suffrage, conducted by secret ballot and with full respect for the right to freedom of association;

(iii) Taking measures, as appropriate, to address the representation of under-represented segments of society;

(iv) Ensuring, through legislation, institutions and mechanisms, the freedom to form democratic political parties that can participate in elections, as well as the transparency and fairness of the electoral process, including through appropriate access under the law to funds and free, independent and pluralistic media;

(*e*) Creating and improving the legal framework and necessary mechanisms for enabling the wide participation of all members of civil society in the promotion and consolidation of democracy, by:

(i) Respecting the diversity of society by promoting associations, dialogue structures, mass media and their interaction as a means of strengthening and developing democracy;

(ii) Fostering, through education and other means, awareness and respect for democratic values;

(iii) Respecting the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and the exercise of the right freely to form, join and participate in non-governmental organizations or associations, including trade unions;

(iv) Guaranteeing mechanisms for consultations with and the contribution of civil society in processes of governance and encouraging cooperation between local authorities and non-governmental organizations;

(v) Providing or improving the legal and administrative framework for non-governmental, community-based and other civil society organizations;

(vi) Promoting civic education and education on human rights, inter alia, in cooperation with organizations of civil society;

(*f*) Strengthening democracy through good governance as referred to in the United Nations Millennium Declaration[5] by, inter alia:

(i) Improving the transparency of public institutions and policy-making procedures and enhancing the accountability of public officials;

(ii) Taking legal, administrative and political measures against corruption, including by disclosing and investigating and punishing all those involved in acts of corruption and by criminalizing payment of commissions and bribes to public officials;

(iii) Bringing government closer to the people by appropriate levels of devolution;

(iv) Promoting the widest possible public access to information about the activities of national and local authorities, as well as ensuring access by all to administrative remedies, without discrimination;

(v) Fostering high levels of competence, ethics and professionalism within the civil service and its cooperation with the public, inter alia, by providing appropriate training for members of the civil service;

(*g*) Strengthening democracy by promoting sustainable development, in particular by:

(i) Taking effective measures aimed at the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights, such as the right to education and the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, individually and through international cooperation;

(ii) Taking effective measures aimed at overcoming social inequalities and creating an environment that is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty;

(iii) Promoting economic freedom and social development and pursuing active policies to provide opportunities for productive employment and sustainable livelihoods;

(iv) Ensuring equal access to economic opportunities and equal pay and other rewards for work of equal value;

(v) Creating a legal and regulatory framework with a view to promoting sustained economic growth and sustainable development;

(*h*) Enhancing social cohesion and solidarity by:

(i) Developing and strengthening, at the local and national levels, institutional and educational capabilities to resolve conflicts and disputes peacefully, including through mediation, and to prevent and eliminate the use of violence in addressing societal tensions and disagreements;

(ii) Improving social protection systems and ensuring access for all to basic social services;

(iii) Encouraging social dialogue and tripartite cooperation with respect to labour relations among government, trade unions and employer organizations, as reflected in the core Conventions of the International Labour Organization;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to disseminate the present resolution as widely as possible.

81st plenary meeting
4 Decembre 2000